

NBC takes Arbitron November sweeps

Comparisons to last year shed little light on effect of peplemeters on decline in prime time viewing

The Arbitron November sweeps numbers for all the local markets were in last week. To no one's surprise, NBC affiliates fared best, delivering a combined average of 14,855,000 homes in prime time. The CBS affiliates were second in average household delivery, with 13,423,000, followed by the ABC affiliates with 12,751,000. Those figures were based on an NBC analysis of the Arbitron numbers.

However, the year-to-year comparisons of the local November sweeps, which many hoped would show how much of this season's network erosion was due to the peplemeter, did not clear up the whole picture. Arbitron's local numbers appeared to mirror the declines shown by Nielsen's peplemeter system for ABC during the sweeps period, but not for CBS or NBC. And last week, no one was sure why.

For NBC, the peplemeter showed a 4% decline for the network nationally in prime time during the sweep period. However, the local Arbitron sweeps showed NBC affiliates up 2% in households in prime time. CBS and ABC were down about 13% each, according to the Nielsen peplemeter numbers. While the local numbers from Arbitron appeared to support ABC's big drop, CBS affiliates were off only 5% from a year ago, less than half the drop recorded by Nielsen's peplemeter during the sweep.

The results appeared to substantiate the network position that the local measurements, based on a sample of 110,000 homes nationwide, would show that at least some of the network erosion this year (10% in rating and 4% in share) was the result of the change of methodologies for measuring the national audience. The local sweeps numbers continue to be derived from meter/diary samples in the top-15 markets (which account for about 40% of all U.S. television homes) and diary samples from the rest.

According to William Rubens, vice president, research, NBC, the local Arbitron numbers appear to indicate that perhaps one-third of the network erosion this year is due to the switch to peplemeters. The lower numbers, according to the peplemeter, he said, are probably due to the faster turnover rate and lower cooperation rate that Nielsen has had with its peplemeter sample.

At deadline last week, Nielsen was still tabulating its local sweeps results, which should be available this week.

The following is a market-by-market presentation of daypart audience estimates for TV households in total survey areas during network prime time (Monday-Saturday, 8-11 p.m., and Sunday, 7-11 p.m., Eastern time). Numbers are in thousands (add 000). Boldface numbers indicate the market winner. A dash indicates no primary or secondary affiliation in the market. The information is © copyright 1987 by Arbitron Ratings Co. It may not be quoted or reproduced without the prior permission of Arbitron.

Prime time TSA households (000)				Prime time TSA households (000)			
ADI (rank)	ABC	CBS	NBC	ADI (rank)	ABC	CBS	NBC
Abilene-Sweetwater, Tex. (155)	17	18	29	Columbia, S.C. (87)	24	35	83
Albany, Ga. (151)	4	—	58	Columbia-Jefferson City, Mo. (152)	15	28	27
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, N.Y. (52)	55	76	81	Columbus, Ga. (118)	35	34	20
Albuquerque, N.M. (56)	68	47	75	Columbus, Ohio (33)	92	117	143
Alexandria, La. (160)	5	—	44	Columbus-Tupelo, Miss. (133)	8	27	51
Alexandria, Minn. (182)	4	29	—	Corpus Christi, Tex. (120)	33	27	31
Alpena, Mich. (211)	—	6	—	Dallas-Fort Worth (8)	228	238	227
Amarillo, Tex. (117)	34	23	27	Davenport, Iowa-Rock Island-Moline, Ill. (77)	44	48	64
Anniston, Ala. (192)	—	12	—	Dayton, Ohio (48)	62	90	74
Ardmore-Ada, Okla. (172)	18	24	19	Denver (19)	152	120	161
Atlanta (12)	169	185	251	Des Moines (66)	45	65	68
Augusta, Ga. (102)	37	42	33	Detroit (7)	246	248	358
Austin, Tex. (71)	45	65	48	Dothan, Ala. (157)	10	40	—
Bakersfield, Calif. (145)	21	24	29	Duluth, Minn.-Superior, Wis. (122)	25	26	35
Baltimore (22)	131	150	177	El Centro, Calif.-Yuma, Ariz. (181)	—	5	9
Bangor, Me. (156)	14	23	23	El Paso (104)	31	29	43
Baton Rouge (91)	52	51	41	Elmira, N.Y. (165)	9	—	15
Beaumont-Port Arthur, Tex. (124)	31	38	43	Erie, Pa. (143)	20	19	37
Bend, Ore. (207)	—	5	5	Eugene, Ore. (137)	24	30	19
Billings-Hardin, Mont. (164)	11	16	12	Eureka, Calif. (186)	—	7	9
Biloxi-Gulfport-Pascagoula, Miss. (179)	26	—	—	Evansville, Ind. (90)	41	35	43
Binghamton, N.Y. (132)	11	40	20	Fargo, N.D. (107)	26	28	34
Birmingham, Ala. (49)	81	42	122	Flagstaff, Ariz. (205)	—	—	8
Bluefield-Beckley-Oak Hill, W.Va. (141)	20	—	28	Flint-Saginaw-Bay City, Mich. (59)	71	35	93
Boise, Idaho (136)	21	19	31	Florence, S.C. (130)	20	50	—
Boston (6)	227	267	361	Fort Myers-Naples, Fla. (98)	18	39	39
Bowling Green, Ky. (191)	22	—	—	Fort Smith, Ark. (148)	19	31	19
Bristol, Va.-Kingsport, Johnson City, Tenn. (86)	20	44	68	Fort Wayne, Ind. (99)	36	38	39
Buffalo, N.Y. (38)	81	95	106	Fresno-Visalia, Calif. (63)	49	51	58
Burlington, Vt.-Plattsburgh, N.Y. (96)	12	44	42	Gainesville, Fla. (166)	16	—	—
Butte, Mont. (189)	7	11	7	Glendive, Mont. (212)	—	2	1
Casper-Riverton, Wyo. (188)	4	5	13	Grand Junction-Durango, Colo. (176)	7	13	11
Cedar Rapids-Waterloo-Dubuque, Iowa (78)	42	38	67	Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo-Battle Creek, Mich. (39)	75	73	92
Charleston, S.C. (109)	30	44	49	Great Falls, Mont. (177)	10	9	5
Charleston-Huntington, W.Va. (46)	60	64	105	Green Bay-Appleton, Wis. (68)	55	56	66
Charlotte, N.C. (31)	78	115	58	Greensboro-Winston Salem-High Point, N.C. (50)	61	84	86
Charlottesville, Va. (197)	—	—	10	Greenville-New Bern-Washington, N.C. (95)	27	45	60
Chattanooga (80)	41	45	57	Greenville-Spartanburg, S.C.-Asheville, N.C. (36)	78	94	133
Chynne, Wyo.-Scottsbluff, Neb.-String, Colo. (183)	—	15	—	Greenwood-Greenville, Miss. (168)	23	14	—
Chicago (3)	485	351	503	Hagerstown, Md. (195)	—	—	16
Chico-Redding, Calif. (140)	26	23	18	Harrisburg-York-Lancaster-Lebanon, Pa. (45)	49	67	113
Cincinnati (29)	88	113	130	Harrisonburg, Va. (200)	16	—	—
Clarksburg-Weston, W.Va. (162)	—	22	25	Hartford-New Haven, Conn. (23)	108	173	95
Cleveland (11)	242	201	254	Helena, Mont. (209)	—	—	5
Colorado Springs-Pueblo (97)	37	38	40	Houston (10)	219	173	209